Project EASIER

Web Application
BEDS Processing Manual

Fall 2004

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INTRODUCTION

About this Manual

This manual serves as a reference guide to help you with the Iowa Department of Education Project EASIER web processing application. This web application automates the creation of BEDS reports, thereby making the process of data reporting more efficient and effective.

Expanded Data Reporting Requirements

In our effort to promote efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness of the data received from Iowa schools and to reduce the data burden on Iowa schools, the Department has re-engineered data collections based upon paper-based summary reports to electronically collect individual student records. Individual student records provided through Project EASIER enable the Department to aggregate the data needed to meet state and federal reporting requirements, policy development, and accountability at the local, state, and federal levels.

The Department has undertaken a major expansion of the project with additional data elements added to the collection and implementation of a system to assign a unique student identifier to each student's record. Expansion also includes receiving/requiring all public districts to submit the required information by individual student records. Additional data for the Department's Basic Educational Data Survey (BEDS) will be collected as well as data for two major federal initiatives -- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Performance Based Data Management Initiative (PBDMI).

System Requirements

The Project EASIER data processing system is an application that utilizes standard web technologies. As such, one can access the application using any computer with a modern operating system and web browser. Because the application also incorporates Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) for encryption and security of student data, it is recommended that the latest security patches be applied to guarantee proper interaction between our secure server and the web browser.

Contact Information

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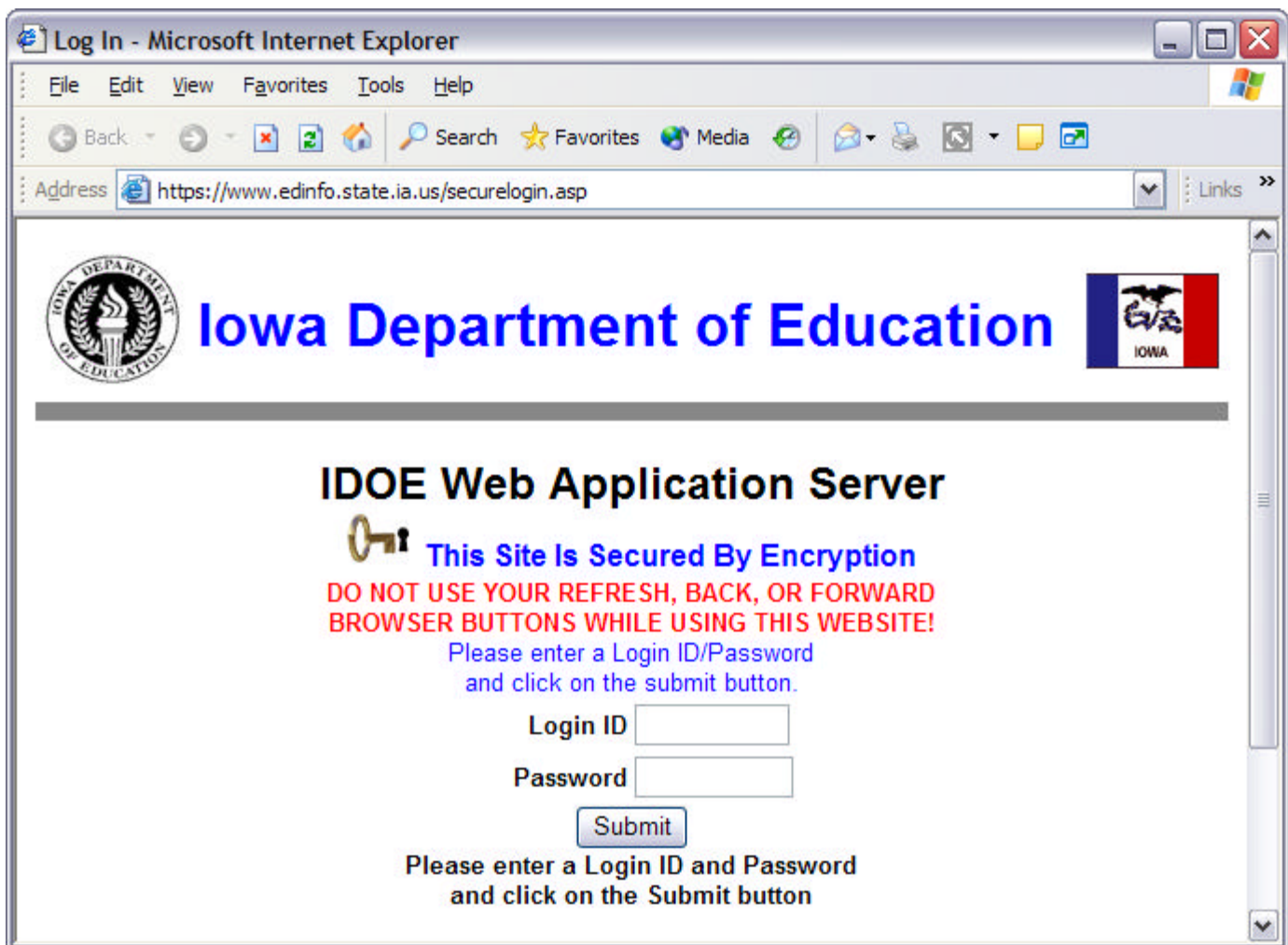Carla Schimelfenig by email at carla.schimelfenig@iowa.gov or phone (515) 281-3111

BEDS PROCESSING

LOGIN AND NAVIGATION

To access the Project EASIER BEDS data application, direct your web browser to the following URL:

https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/

Once the page loads, you should see the following:

Enter your Login ID and Password and click Submit. The Department has provided Login ID's and Passwords to your district administrator.

After logging in, you will be directed to the Application Menu. Click on the Project EASIER button.
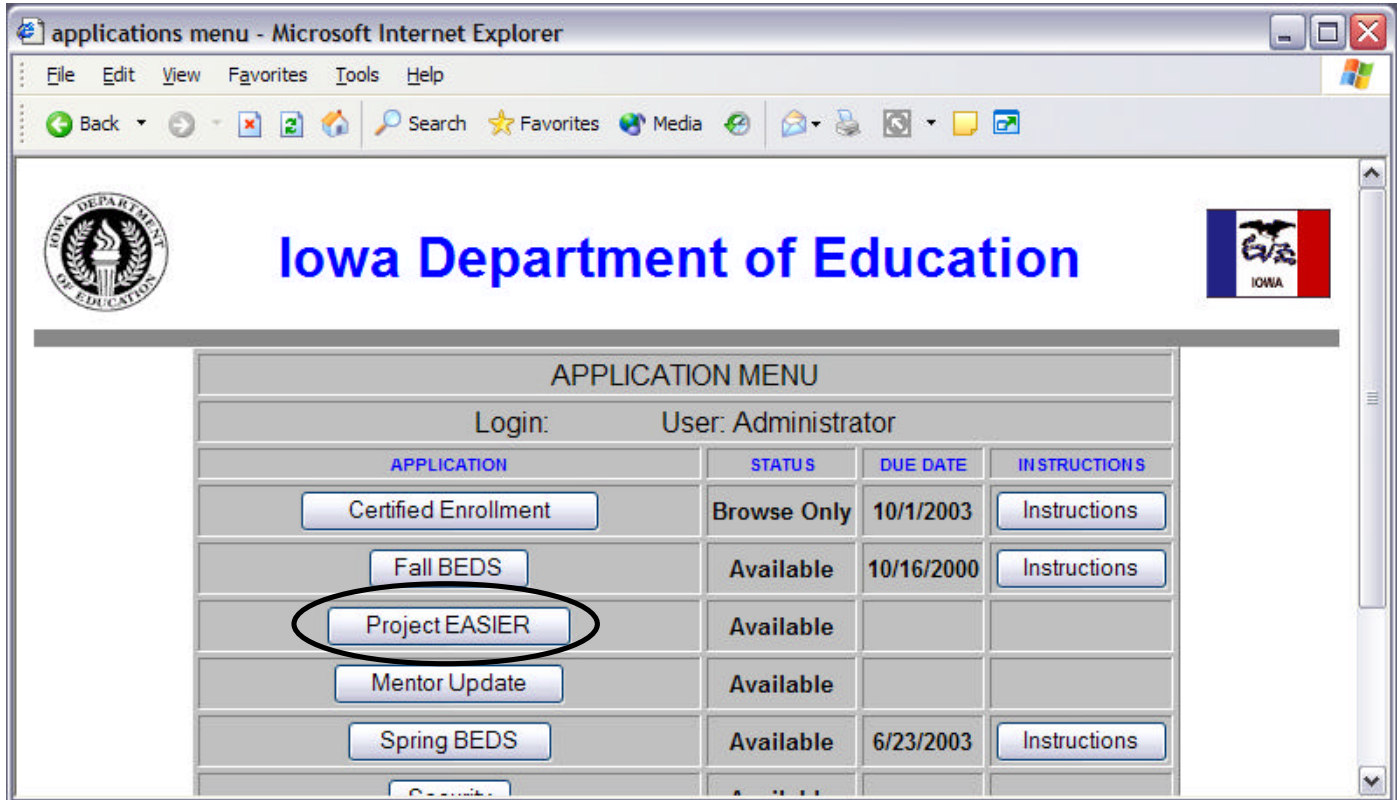
The next page you see is the Project EASIER main menu. To return to this menu at any time, click the EASIER icon in the upper left corner.

To begin data submission, click Submit BEDS Data. This link is only available during the BEDS reporting season. After your district's entire data set has been certified, this link becomes unavailable.
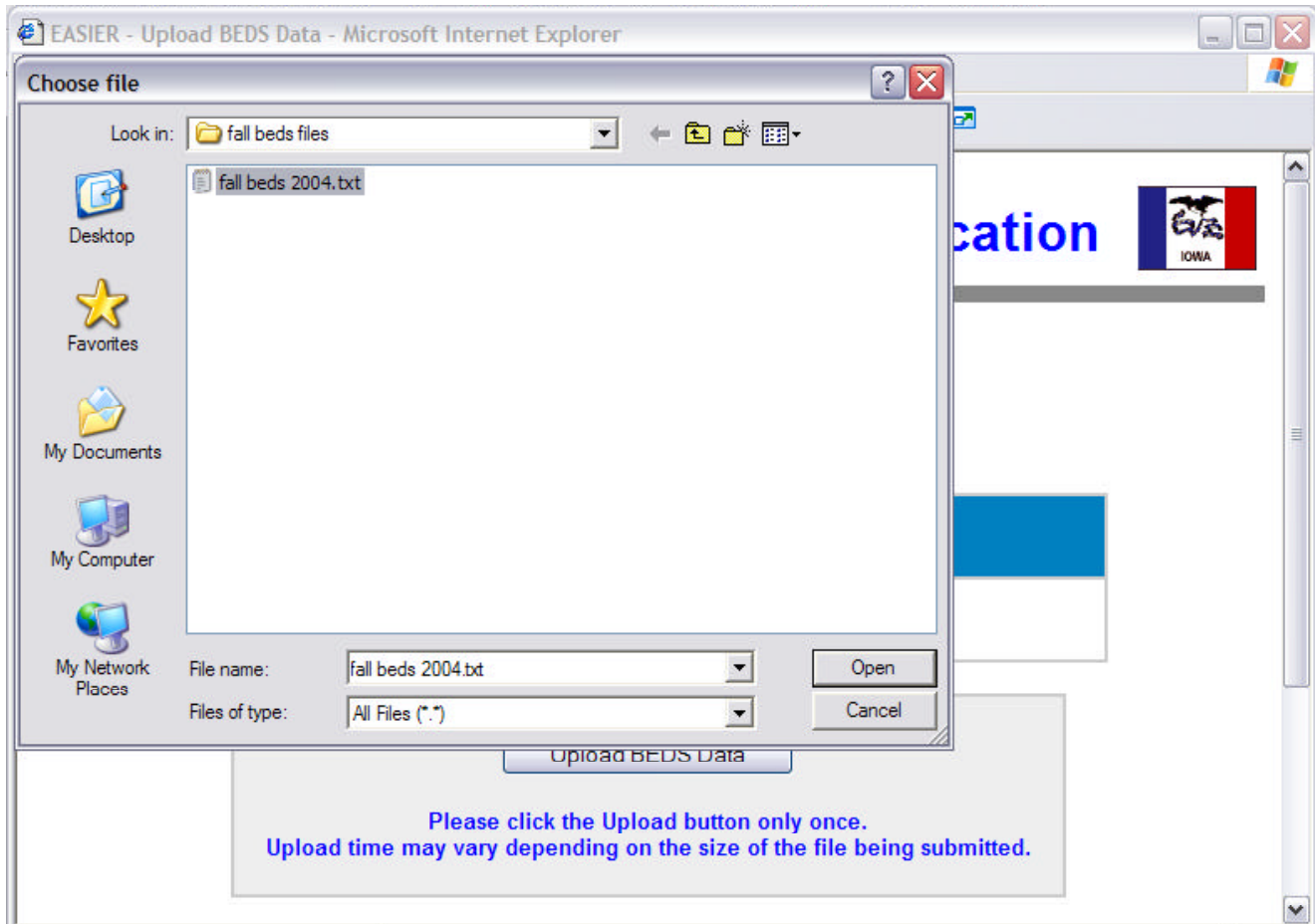
UPLOAD

Before beginning this step, you must create a file or files for BEDS data collection using your Student Information System (SIS). Contact your SIS vendor if you need assistance completing this step. You may upload as many files as necessary to include all of the student records for your district. To do so, simply repeat the following steps for each file.

After clicking Submit BEDS Data on the Project EASIER Main Menu, the following page appears.

Click the Browse... button to select the file you wish to upload.

Locate the file you created in the file selection dialog box. Select the file and click the Open button.

Note for Netscape users: You may need to change the "Files of Type" selection to "All Files" to see your file in this dialog box.


The name of your file now appears in the upload box. Click Upload BEDS Data to continue.

The next page you see notifies you that your file has been received and assigned a File ID. The File ID is important to remember, should you need to return to this data later or if you encounter any system errors during processing.

The system performs some preliminary checks on the uploaded file to catch possible incorrect file selections. You will see an error message on this page if any problems are encountered.

If you do not see any error messages, click Continue to Next Step.
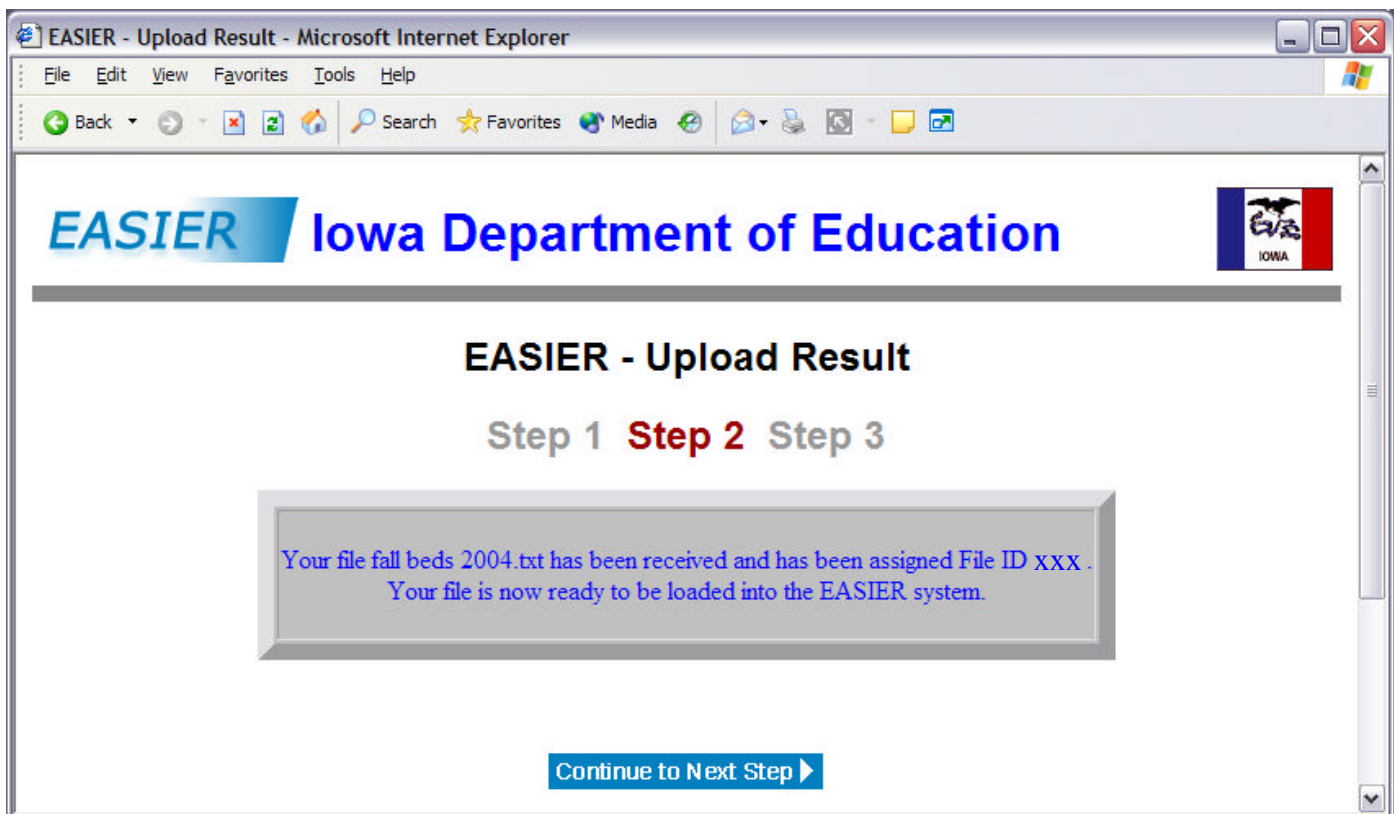
DATA VALIDATION

At this point, the information in the file has been loaded into the EASIER system. Next, the system will validate the data contained in the file to ensure data integrity and adherence to the Department of Education's Data Dictionary (see the Reference section for additional information).

During validation, the system examines the file for common problems such as missing, incomplete, or invalid data or conflicting information among multiple data elements. If such problems are encountered, the system marks the problem as either an error or a warning. Errors must be resolved before file processing can continue. Warnings are intended as informational and can be left unresolved -- nonetheless, it is recommended that you review all warnings for potential shortcomings in your data.

It is important to note that these errors and warnings are not application errors. An application error prevents any and all further processing on a particular file.

To initiate the validation process, click Continue to Next Step on the following screen:
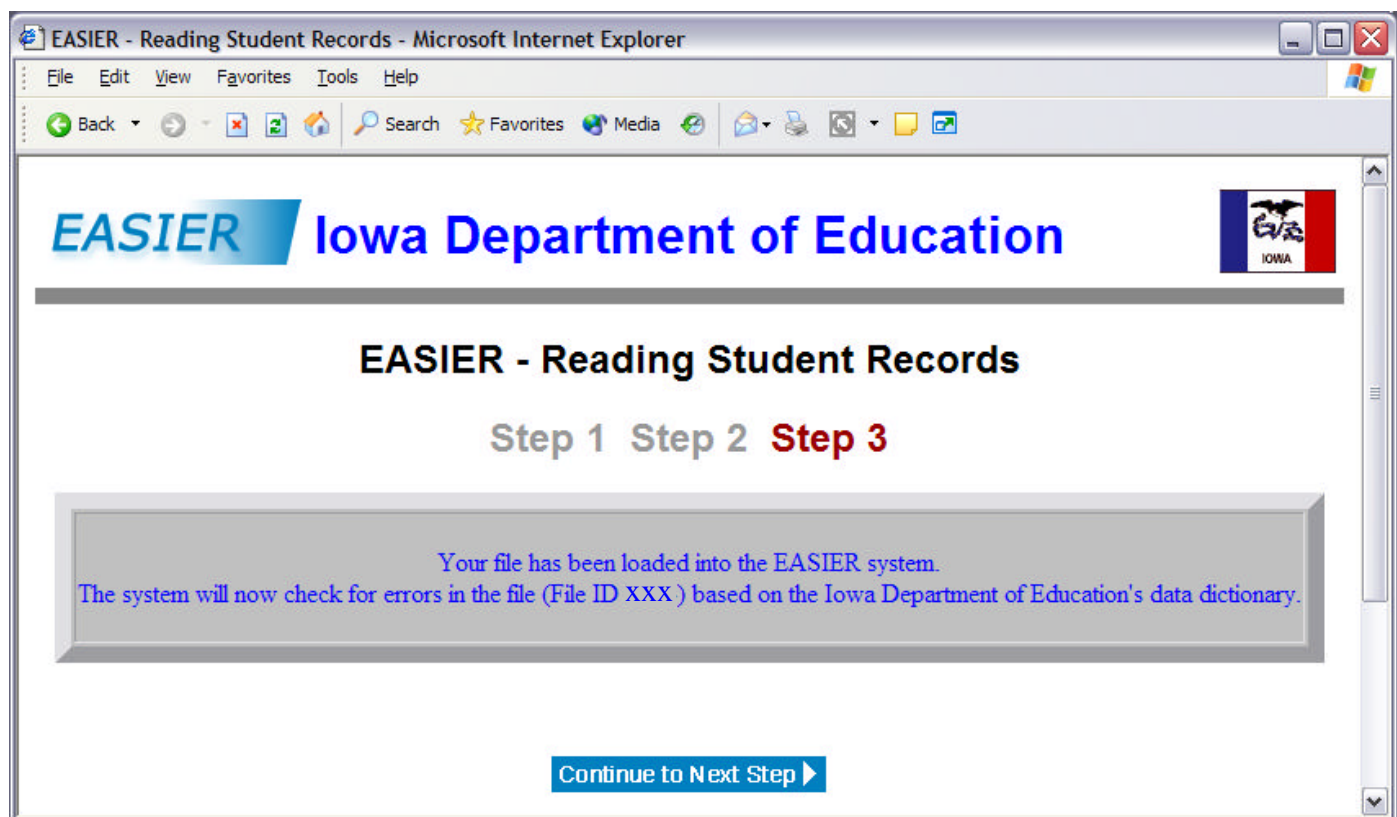
FILE SUMMARY

After the file has been loaded into the system and the data validation process is complete, the system presents a summary of the processing to this point. This page provides information about the number errors or warnings found, how many schools, students, courses, and suspension / expulsion records were in the file, and several buttons to initiate various actions.

This page serves as a central point for accessing, fixing, and finalizing data contained in a file. It is possible to stop work on a file and return later, should that be necessary. To return to this page, perform the following steps.

On the Project EASIER Main Menu, click View Submitted Files.

Locate the file of interest on the list of submitted files. This page displays all files uploaded by the district associated with the current login information. New files are added to the top of the list. Click View to return to the File Summary for that file.

FILE SUMMARY -- Error / Warning Correction

The file summary page displays the number of data validation errors and warnings detected in your file. If more than 30 errors are found in a single file, further processing is not allowed. If 30 errors or fewer are found in the file, the problem data must be modified and re-checked prior to subsequent processing. No limit is applied to the number of warnings, though the error limit will disallow modification of all data. Another option to correcting data here is to correct the information in the Student Information System, create a new file, and upload the new file.

To review and correct data that has generated error or warning messages, click the appropriate View and Correct icon.

The system will display the following page when viewing errors. A similar page is displayed when viewing warnings. To view the problem data, click the View and Correct button next to the corresponding Student Demographic Data, Curriculum Data, or Suspensions and Expulsions label.
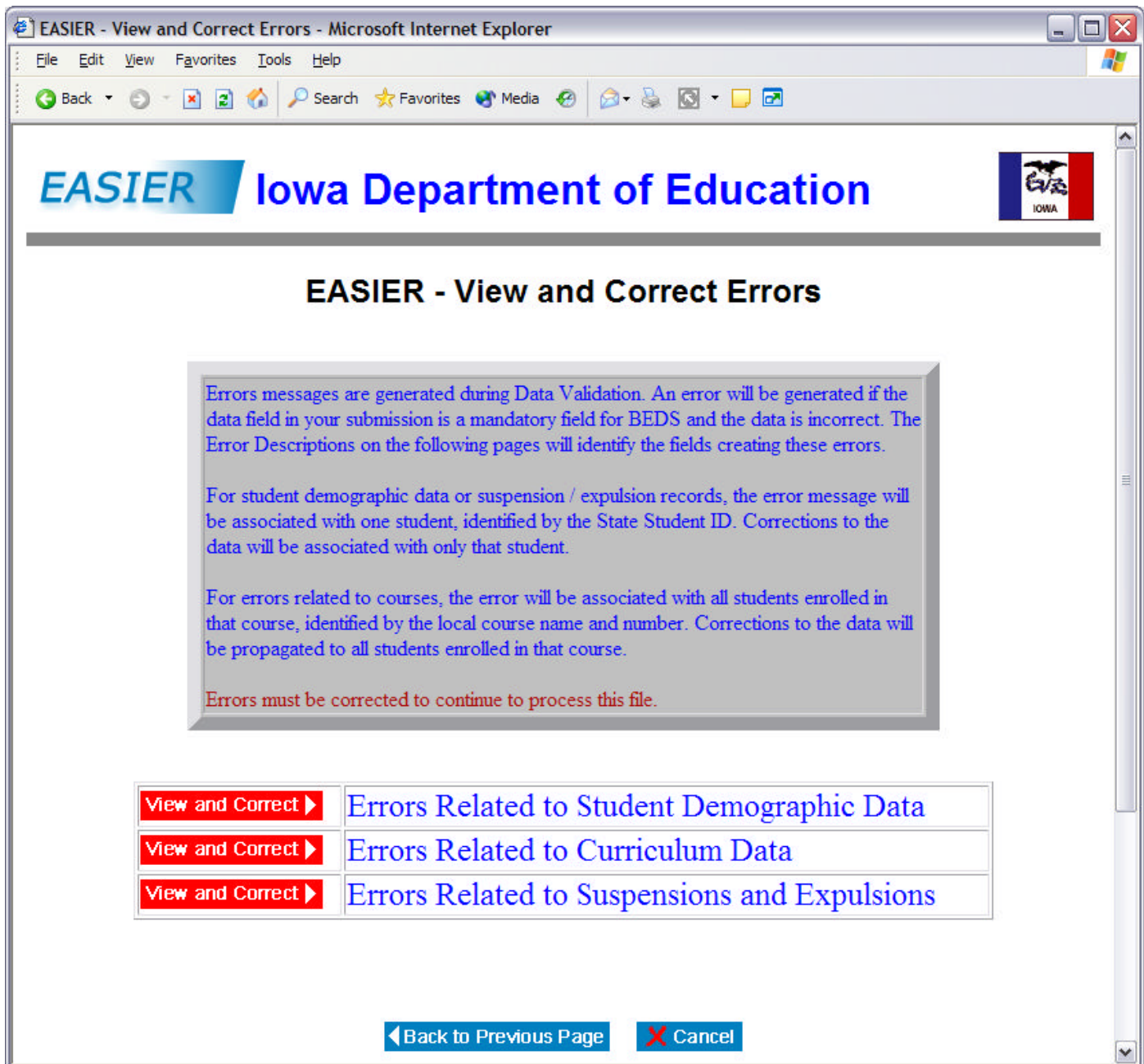
This example shows a list of student demographic errors. Similar pages are displayed when viewing curriculum and suspension / expulsion errors or warnings. If the current file has more than 30 errors, this page will not contain the New Value column and all data will be read-only.

Note about printing: All pages in this application are standard web pages. Hard copies are readily available by simply printing the appropriate page.

The Department recommends modifying the data in your Student Information System to match any changes made here. To modify the data, enter the new value into the New Value field for each error or warning. After all values have been entered, click Correct Now. The data will be modified and your browser will be redirected to the File Summary. Repeat these steps for each category.
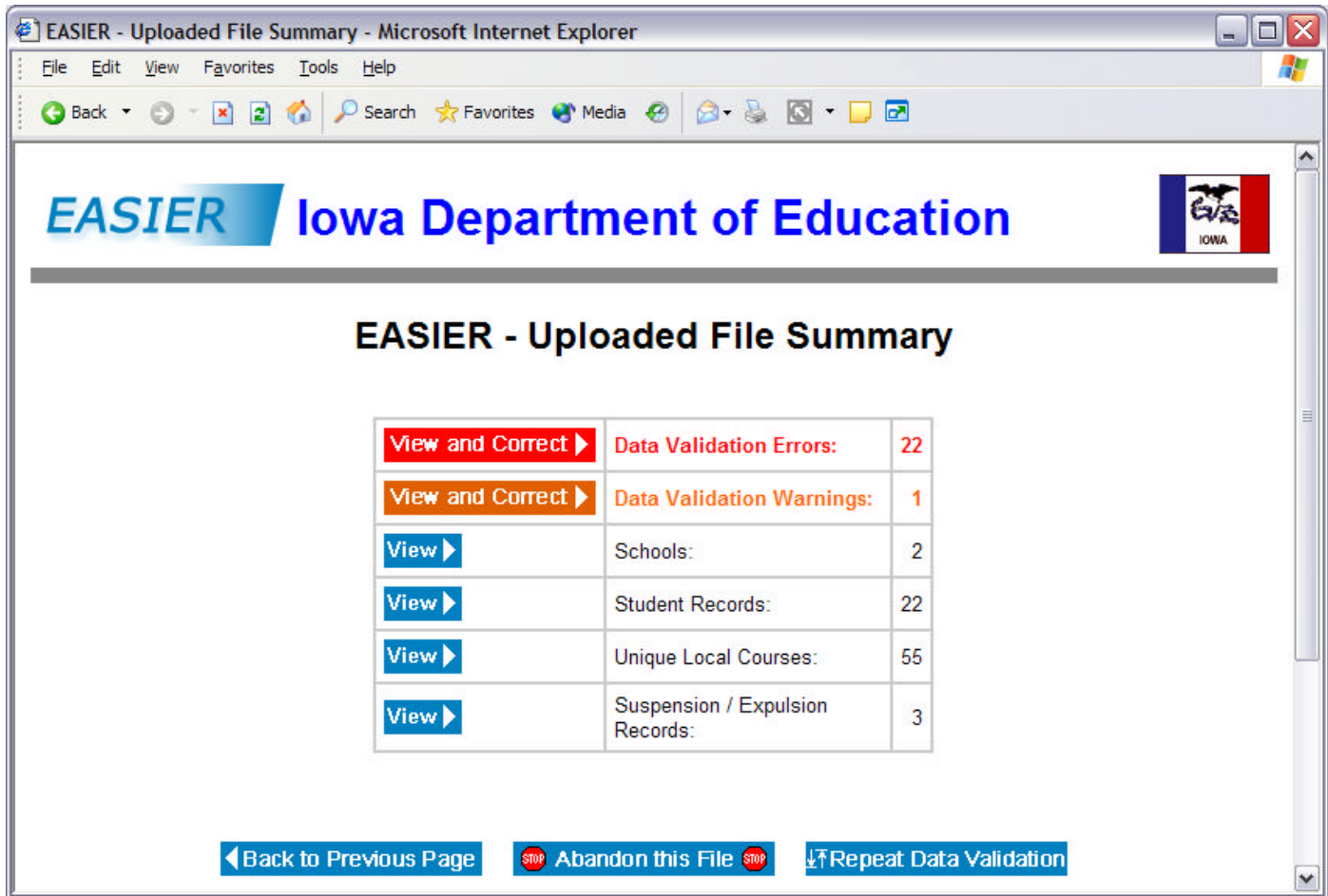
Also available from this page is the Department's Data Dictionary. Clicking the Help icon will open a new browser window pointing to the online reference (see Reference section for further information). Use this reference when modifying data to ensure appropriate values are assigned to problem data.

Note: All changes made on this web page need to be made in the Student Information System.

After modifying your data to account for validation errors or warnings, the file must be validated again. To do this, click Repeat Data Validation on the File Summary page.

Upon completion of this re-validation, the system returns your browser to the list of submitted files. To view the updated File Summary, click View for the appropriate file.

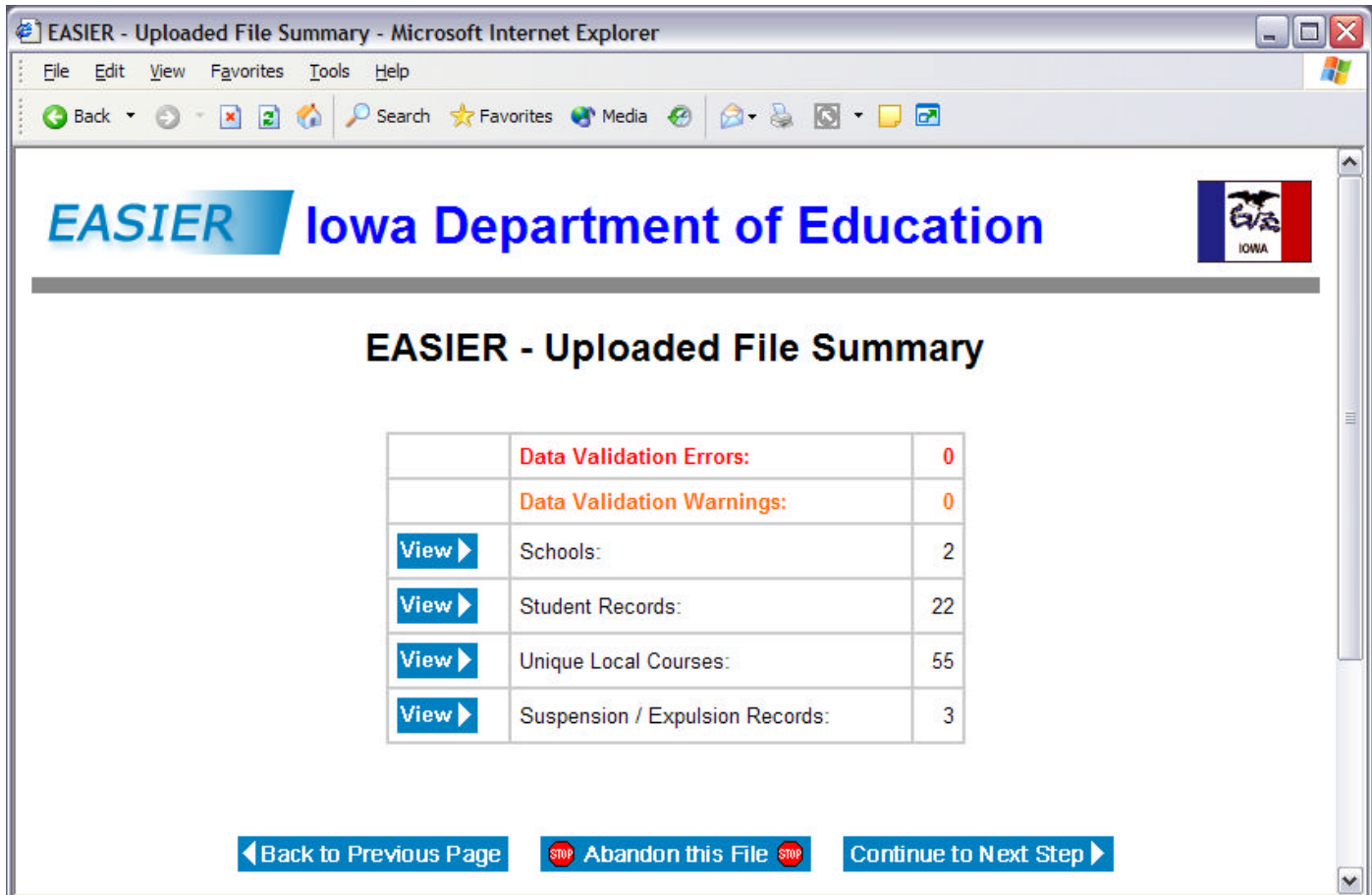If all errors or warnings have been corrected, the page will appear as follows. If errors or warnings still remain, the correction and validation process can be repeated as necessary. It is possible that new errors or warnings will be created through data modification -- conflicts can be created that were not present in the original file.
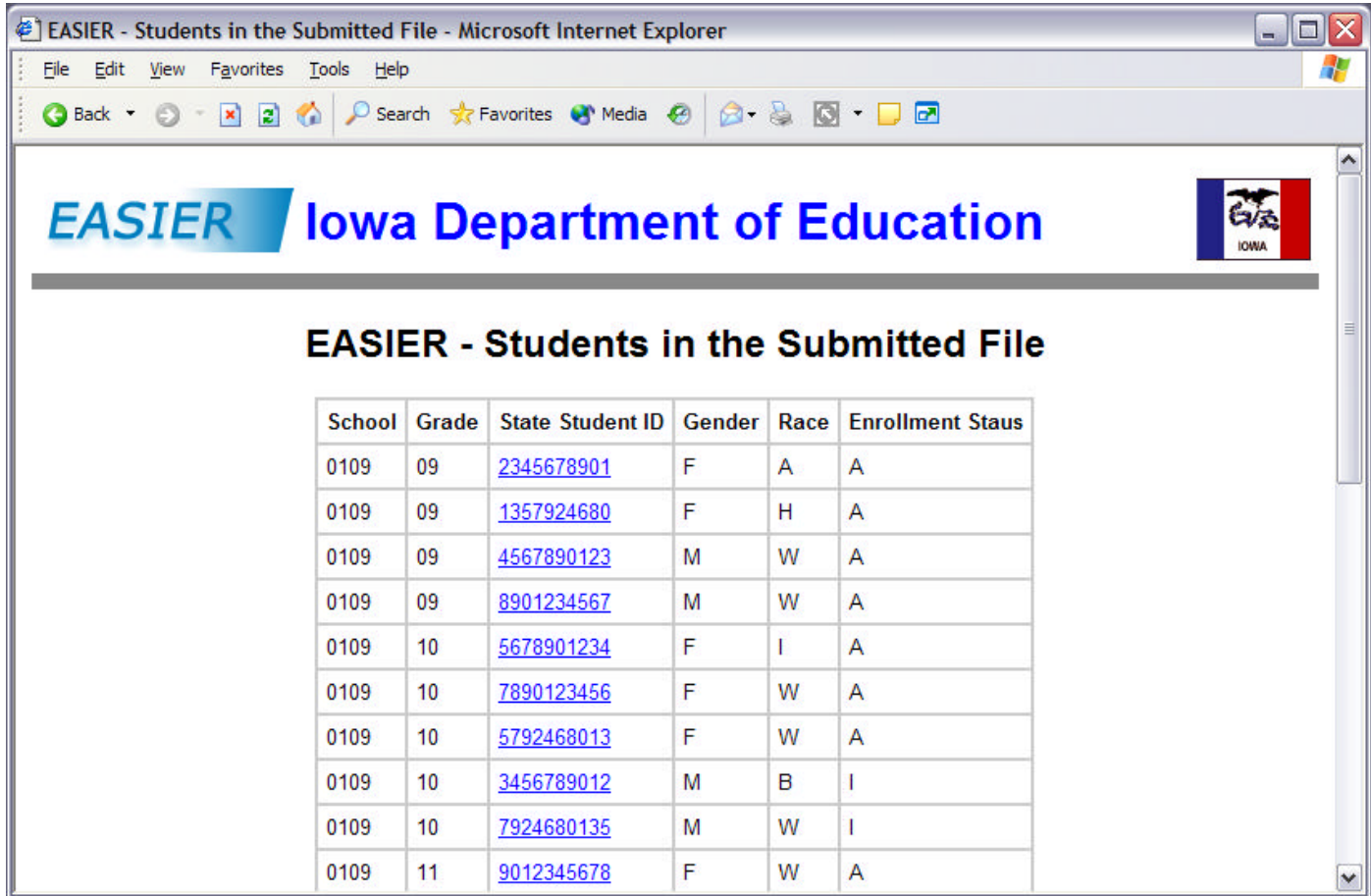
FILE SUMMARY -- Brief Data Review

Summary and detailed listings of the information found in the current file are also available from the File Summary. The summary page itself displays the number of schools, students, courses, and suspensions/expulsions contained in the file. More detailed listings are accessible by clicking any of the View icons. The following pages provide a fictitious example of a student listing, obtained by clicking View next to the Student Records label. Clicking the State Student ID link opens a new browser window with very detailed information about that particular student.

Example of a detailed student listing (obtained by clicking on View Student Records)

EASIER - Students in the Submitted File

School	Grade	State Student ID	Gender	Race	Enrollment Staus
0109	09	2345678901	F	A	A
0109	09	1357924680	F	H	A
0109	09	4567890123	M	W	A
0109	09	8901234567	M	W	A
0109	10	5678901234	F	I	A
0109	10	7890123456	F	W	A
0109	10	5792468013	F	W	A
0109	10	3456789012	M	B	I
0109	10	7924680135	M	W	I
0109	11	9012345678	F	W	A

Example of a single student view (obtained by clicking on the State Student ID)

All Data for Student (2345678901)

Demographic Information

State Student ID	2345678901
Local Student Number	022338
School	0109
Grade	09
Gender	F
Race / Ethnicity	A
Birth Date	07/16/1989

Enrollment Information

Enrollment Date	08/23/1995
Enrollment Status	A
Enrollment Type	2
Exit Date	
Exit Code	

Various Indicators

Title 1 Reading	N
Title 1 Math	N
Title 1 School Wide	N
Free Lunch	N
Reduced Lunch	Y
IEP	N
Section 504	N
Gifted / Talented	N
Homeless Status	5
Title 3 Indicator	N
Migrant	N
Immigrant	Y
Birth Country	PH
Date Entered USA	01/05/1993

ELL

Home Language	TL
ELL Status	1
ELL Identification Method	3
ELL Assessment	3
English Proficiency Level	2
Date of ELL Placement	09/23/1995
Type of ELL Instruction	2

Graduation

Graduate Intention Location	
Graduate Intention Code	
Graduation Status	N
Diploma	
Composite ACT Score	

Perkins

Perkins Indicator	N
Perkins Single Parent	N
Perkins Educational Barrier	N
Program Identifier	
Concentrator	
Occupational Proficiency	
Program Identifier	
Concentrator	
Occupational Proficiency	
Program Identifier	
Concentrator	
Occupational Proficiency	
Program Identifier	
Concentrator	
Occupational Proficiency	

No Removals

Courses

Number	Course Name
0000	Algebra IA
0000	Algebra IB
0000	English 9A
0000	English 9B
0000	Fund. of Art
0000	Keyboard I
0000	P.E.
0000	P.E. - MEX
0000	Physical Science
0000	Physical Science
0000	Spanish I
0000	Spanish I
0000	U.S. History
3200	U.S. History

FILE SUMMARY -- Abandon File

Many reasons exist to justify the need to mark a file as unusable. Examples include an overabundance of errors, inappropriate inclusion or exclusion of a student population, and so on. As will be shown later, performing this action will identify this file as no longer useful. Should it become necessary or appropriate to abandon a file, the file summary page provides a link to do it.
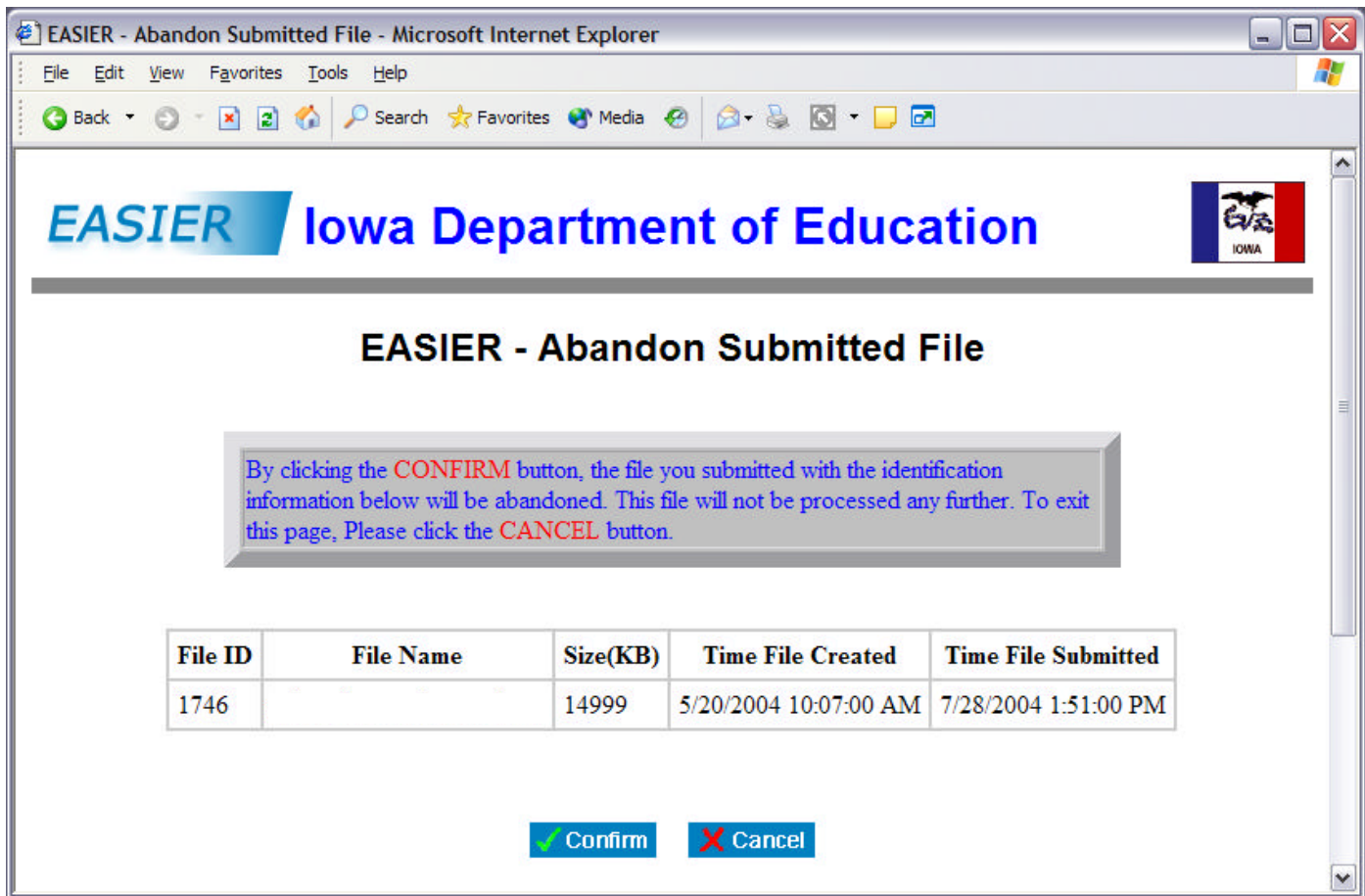
To abandon a file, click Abandon this File.

After clicking the link to abandon this file, the system will ask to confirm this action. Click Confirm to abandon the file. Click Cancel to return to the file summary.

After confirming the abandonment of the file, the browser will be directed to the main menu. The file will henceforth appear as follows in the list of submitted files. No further processing will occur on the file.
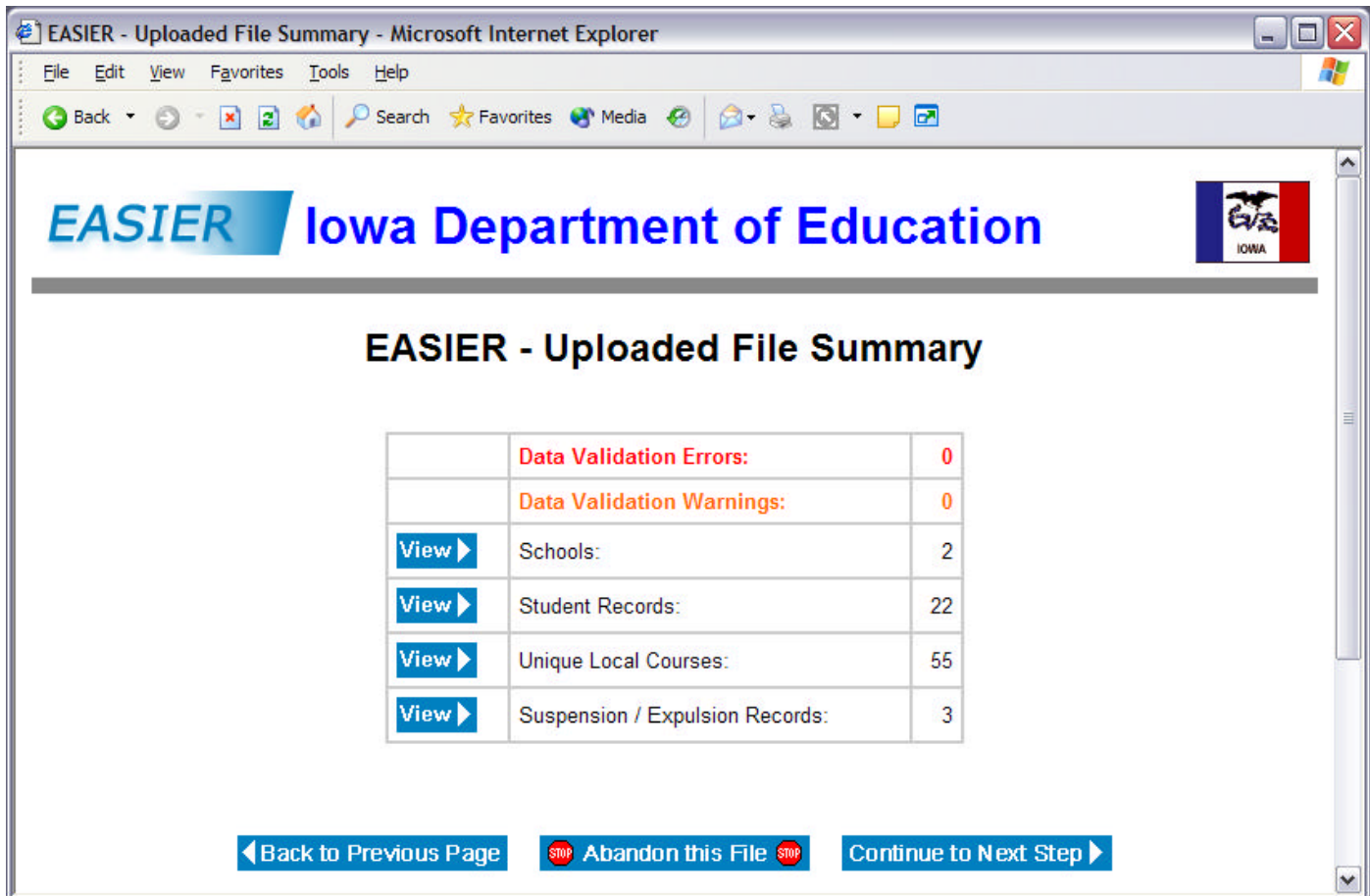
FILE SUMMARY -- Continuing File Processing

Once all errors are resolved, all necessary warnings have been addressed, and a brief review of the file data indicates all is well, clicking Continue to Next Step will move the file to the BEDS Review and Verification pages.

BEDS PREVIEW AND VERIFICATION

The Department greatly expanded the scope and quantity of student data collected through Project EASIER, starting with the Fall 2004 reporting season. Due to the importance and size of the state collection data set, district staff must thoroughly review any data submitted to ensure accuracy and completeness. Because of the breadth of data covered in the student record submissions, the EASIER system provides a preview and verification mechanism. Using this interface, the district user can review, in great detail, each aspect of the data collected through Project EASIER.

Upon clicking Continue to Next Step on the preceding file summary page, the system presents the following screen.
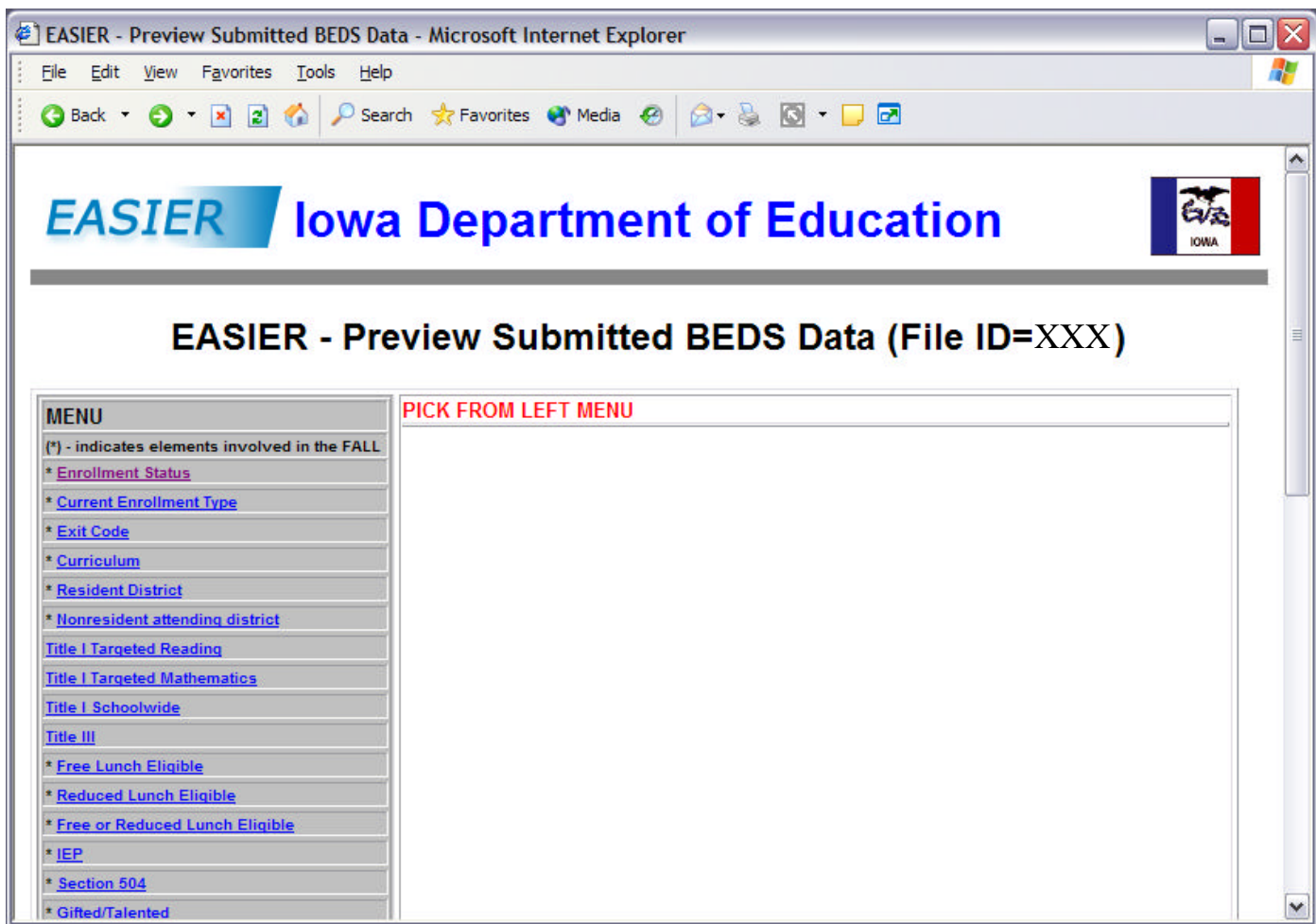
BEDS PREVIEW AND VERIFICATION -- Student Indicators

The menu on the left represents various categories of data present in the state standard data file. Click any item to review the data in your file based on the selected category. It is important to note that these summaries are related only to the current file and will not include data from other files previously sent by the district.

If the selected category is one that contains one of several codes, such as enrollment type, the system will display several tables. These tables will contain a count of all students in the file, followed by a count of students marked with each subsequent code. Each table will expand these counts by grade, sex, and race / ethnicity. An example of selecting Enrollment Type follows.

Note: The summaries displayed on this page relate only to the current file. Data from other files previously uploaded will not be included.

If the selected category is one that is a simple Yes / No indicator, such as the Migrant indicator, the system will display only one table. This table will contain a count of all students in the file with a "yes" value for that indicator. The table will expand this count by grade, sex, and race / ethnicity. An example of selecting Migrant Indicator follows.

Migrant

Total marked as Yes [View Details]

Grade	White, not of Hispanic Origin		Black, not of Hispanic Origin		Asian or Pacific Islander		Hispanic		American Indian or Alaskan Native		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
11th	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

BEDS PREVIEW AND VERIFICATION -- Curriculum

If the selected category is curriculum, the system displays a different style of table. The display is a cross between a simple list of courses present in the file and the final BEDS report created at the end of this process. The table contains a unique list of local course numbers and names with their corresponding state course codes (NCES Course Code and Accreditation Area). The state codes are split into their component fields for clarity. An example of selecting Curriculum follows.

EASIER - Preview Submitted BEDS Data - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File   Edit   View   Favorites   Tools   Help

Back   Search   Favorites   Media

Iowa Department of Education

EASIER - Preview Submitted BEDS Data (File ID=1800)

MENU
(*) - indicates elements involved in the FALL
* Enrollment Status
* Current Enrollment Type
* Exit Code
* Curriculum
* Resident District
* Nonresident attending district
Title I Targeted Reading
Title I Targeted Mathematics
Title I Schoolwide
Title III
* Free Lunch Eligible
* Reduced Lunch Eligible
* Free or Reduced Lunch Eligible
* IEP
* Section 504
* Gifted/Talented
* Migrant
* Immigrant
* Homeless Status

Curriculum [View Details]

	Local No.	Local Name	Subject	Course	Description	Level	Unit	Seq Term	Seq Year	Subj 1	Subj 2	Subj 3	Course Accred	Male	Female
☐	3200	U.S. History	32	00		No Data	0.50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
☐	5053	Health I	31	00		No Data	0.50	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
☐	8304	Driver Education	14	12	Drivers' Education	General	0.13	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	0
☐	8871	Direct Study	28	02	Special Resource	Special Ed	0.25	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
☐	8872	Direct Study	28	02	Special Resource	Special Ed	0.25	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
☐	0011	Language Arts I	10	01	Eng/La I -9th	General	0.50	1	1	1	5	3	1	5	7
☐	0022	Language Arts I	10	01	Eng/La I -9th	General	0.50	2	1	1	5	3	1	5	7
☐	6003	Art I	11	61	Creat Art-Compre	General	0.50	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	3

The state codes are split into their component fields. The columns shown include Local Course Information (Local No., Local Name) and State Course Information (Subject, Course, Description, Level, Unit, Seq Term, Seq Year, Subj 1, Subj 2, Subj 3, Course Accred, Male, Female).

BEDS PREVIEW AND VERIFICATION -- Student Details

The BEDS preview pages also provide an interface to view a list of students meeting selected criteria in a given category. To view this student list, click the button labeled View Details within the section of interest. To apply additional restrictions to the student list, select the appropriate check boxes next to the categories of interest and select View Details.

An example of a student list with selected criteria restrictions.

Clicking the State Student ID of a student will open a new window displaying all data for a student as seen earlier in the file summary.

The EASIER system also allows for modification of student data at this point.   To modify student data in the current file, click the modify button next to the student's information on any student list page.

Use this page to modify any demographic data associated with the selected student. Click Submit to save your changes. Click Reset to revert the data on this page to its original state.

EASIER - Modify Student (State ID = 4680135792)

Data Elements	Old Value	New Value	Data Elements	Old Value	New Value
Students Demographics			Homeless Information		
District number	0009	0009	Homeless Status	2	2
School Number	0418	0418	Career/Technical (Perkins) Information (Grades 9-12)		
Local Student Number	0109	0109	Perkins Indicator	N	N
Grade Level	00	00	Perkins Program Identifier		U
Gender	F	F	Perkins Concentrator		U Unspecified
Race/Ethnicity	W	W	Perkins Proficiency Indicator		U Unspecified
Birthdate	06/17/1997	06 / 17 / 1997	Perkins Program Identifier		U
Resident District	6512	6512	Perkins Concentrator		U Unspecified
Enrollment/Attendance Information			Perkins Proficiency Indicator		U Unspecified
Enrollment Status	A	A	Perkins Program Identifier		U
Enrollment Type	1	1	Perkins Concentrator		U Unspecified
Enrollment Date	08/23/2003	08 / 23 / 2003	Perkins Proficiency Indicator		U Unspecified
Exit Date		/ /	Perkins Program Identifier		U
Exit Code		U Unspecified	Perkins Concentrator		U Unspecified
Days Enrolled	180	180	Perkins Proficiency Indicator		U Unspecified
Days Present	132	132	Perkins Single Parent	N	N
Indicators(Required for Federal Reporting)			Perkins Educational Barrier	N	N
Title 1 Reading	N	N	English Language Learner (ELL)		
Title 1 Math	N	N	Primary Language		U-Unspecified
Title 1 School Wide	N	N	ELL Identification Method		U Unspecified
Title III Indicator	N	N	ELL Status		U Unspecified
Free Lunch	N	N	ELL Assessment		U Unspecified
Reduced Lunch	Y	Y	English Proficient Level		U Unspecified
IEP	N	N	Date of ELL Placed		/ /
Section 504	N	N	Type of ELL Instruction		U Unspecified
Gifted/Talented	N	N	Graduate/Graduate Intentions Information		
Migrant	N	N	Graduate Intention Location		U Unspecified
Immigrant	N	N	Graduate Intention Code		U Unspecified
Truancy	Y	Y	Graduate Status	N	N
Birth Country	US	US-United States Of America	Diploma Type		U Unspecified
Date Enter USA		/ /	Composite ACT Score		U Unspecified

Submit   Reset

◀ Back to Previous Page

The system will validate the changes to the student record to ensure data integrity and quality. If no errors are found in the modifications, the following success page will be displayed. Click OK to continue. If errors are found in the modifications, the error messages will be displayed on this page. You must resolve data errors before the modifications will be accepted.
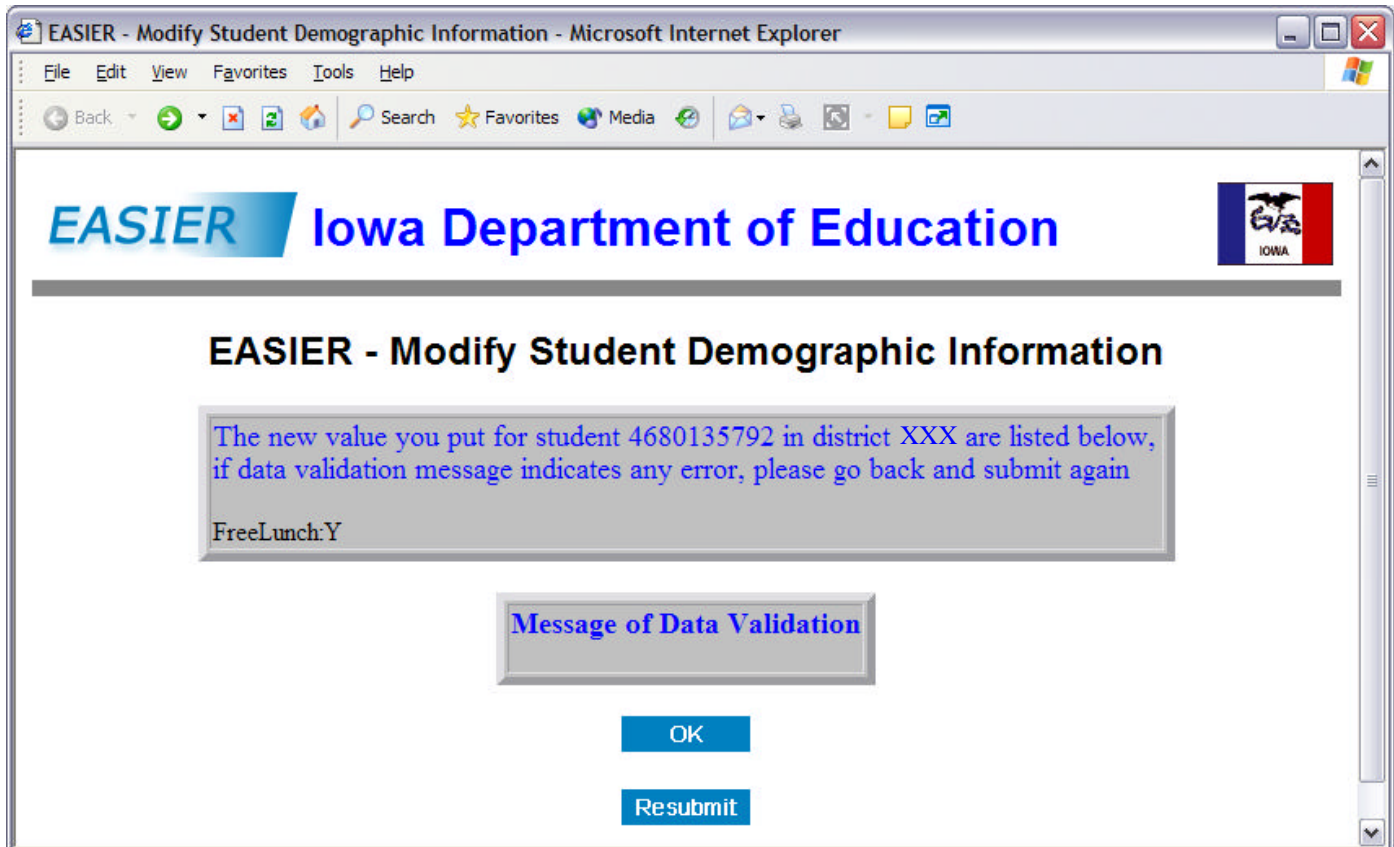
BEDS PREVIEW AND VERIFICATION -- Finalize File

A thorough review of the data in the file should provide enough information to decide whether to give final approval to the data set. If the data set accurately represents district information, click Approve File to initiate the final steps of this process. If the data set is inaccurate, the file can be abandoned in a manner similar to the abandon file process outlined earlier by clicking Abandon this File.
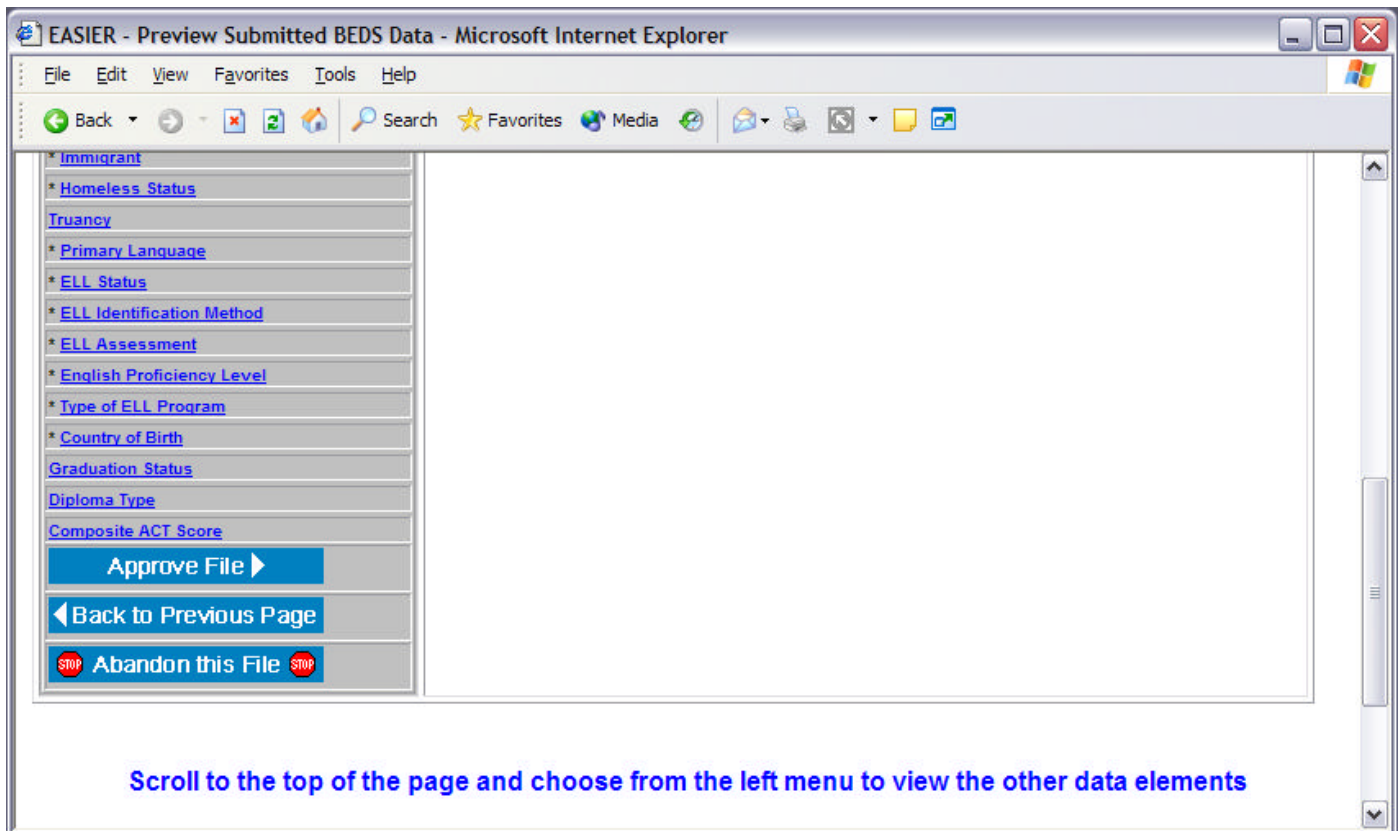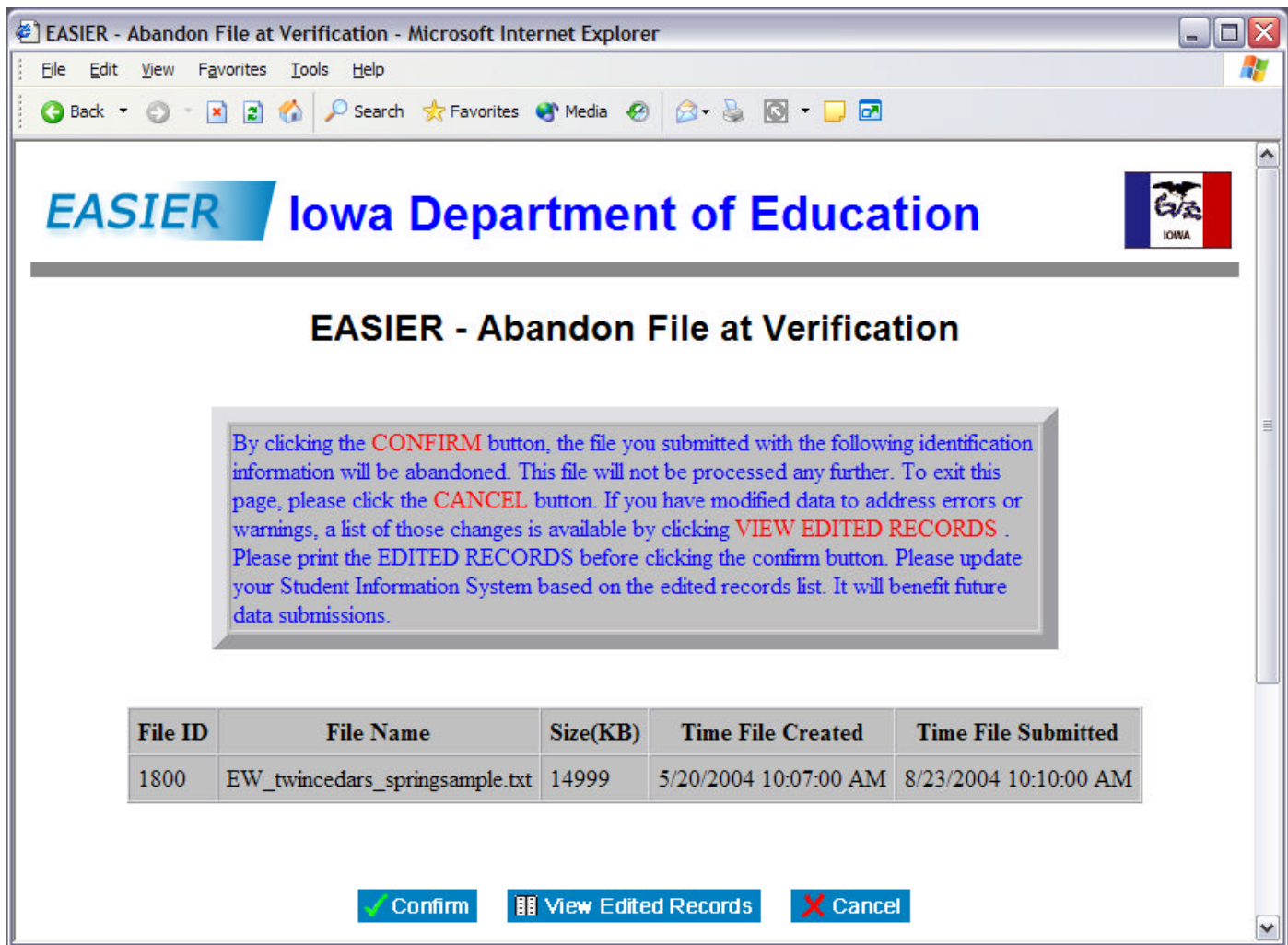

Note: **Click Approve File to give final approval to this file and create BEDS reports.**
     Click Abandon this File to abandon this file -- no reports will be created.

If you wish to abandon the current file at this point, click Abandon this File on the BEDS Preview page. The following confirmation page will appear.

Before confirming this action, it is important to acquire a list of changes present in the data set relative to the original uploaded file. To get this list of modified data, click View Edited Records. A new browser window will open with a list of modified data. Save or print the Edited Records page to use as a guide to modifying the data in your student information system to reflect the changes made here. An example of this list follows the confirmation example.

To complete the abandon process, click Confirm. To exit this page and return to the BEDS Preview, click Cancel.

Note: Save or print a list of modified records by clicking View Edited Records. Use this list to make the corresponding changes in your Student Information System.
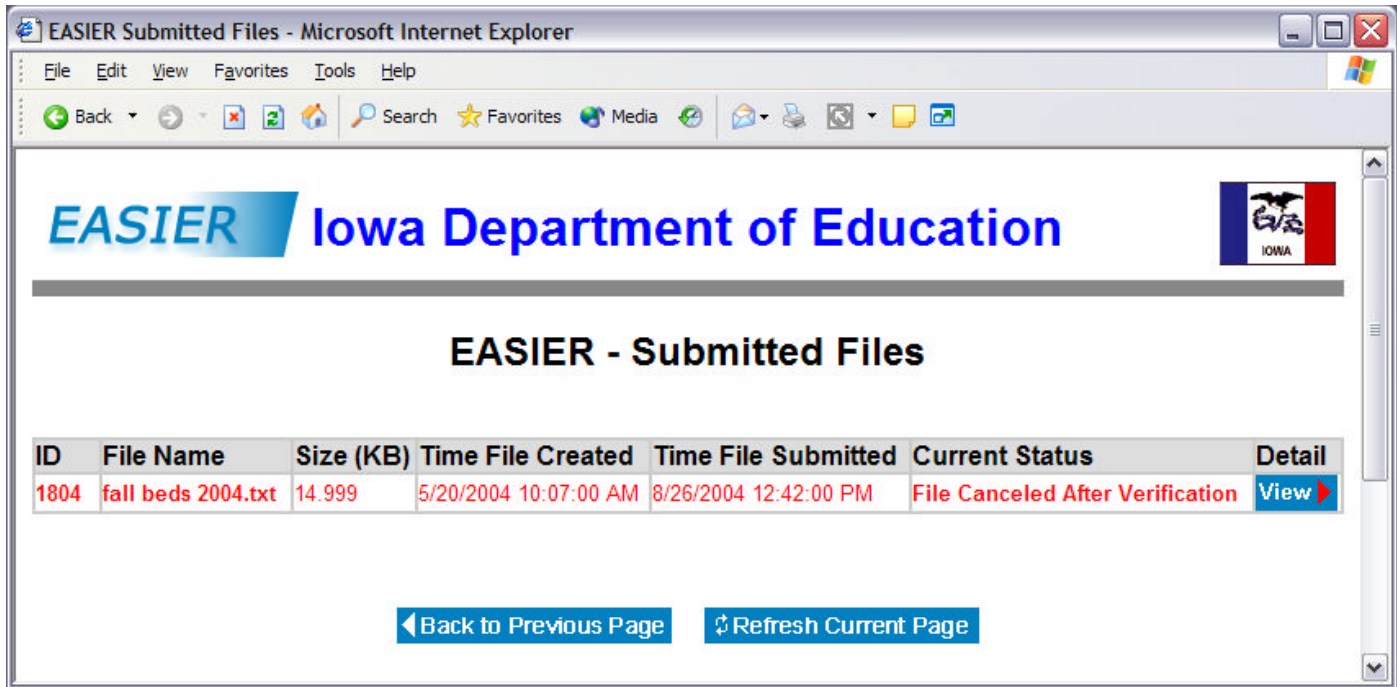
An example of a list of edited records.

A file abandoned at the BEDS Preview step appears as follows in the list of submitted files. The file is no longer available for further processing.
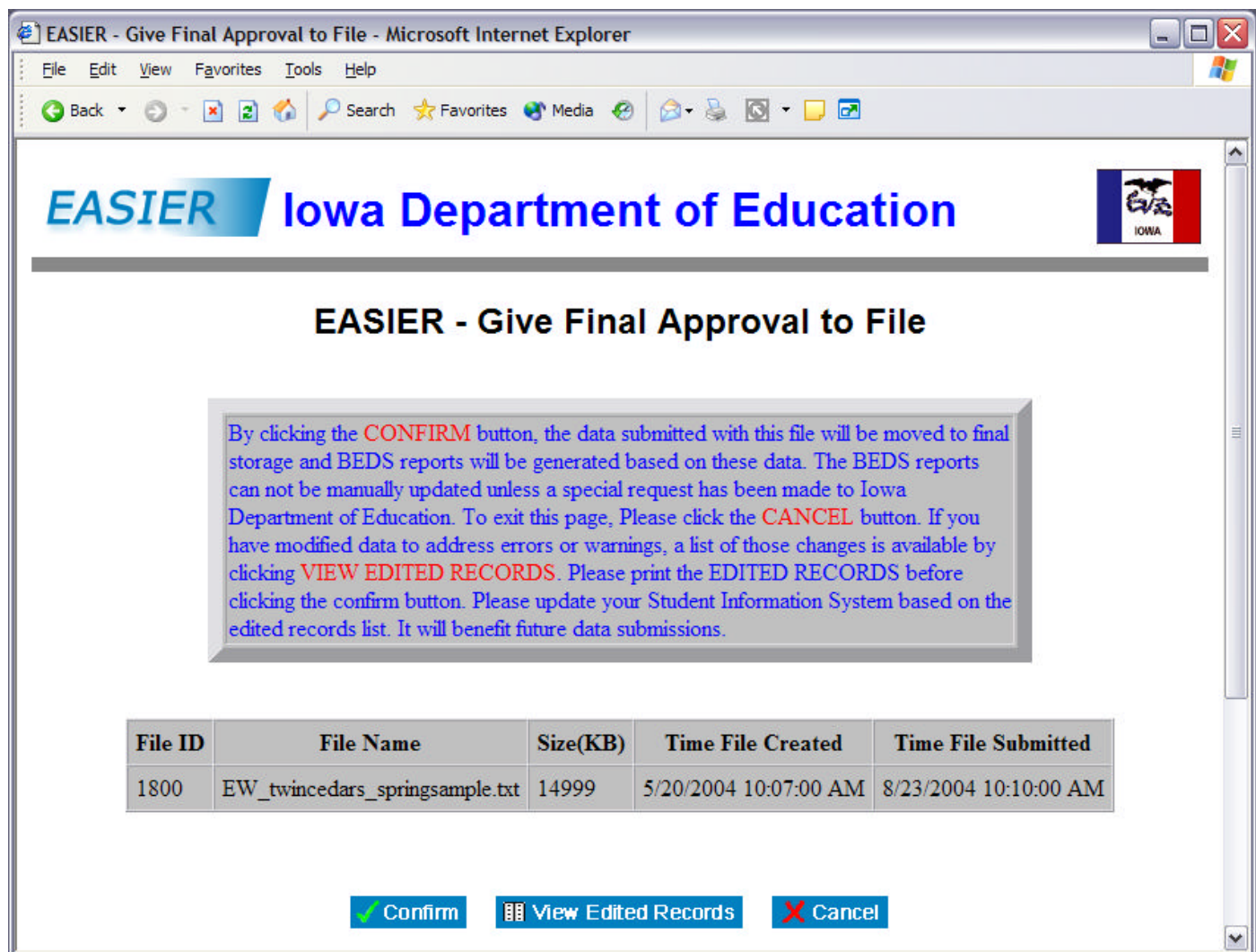
If you wish to give final approval to the file, click Approve File on the menu on the left side of the BEDS Preview. The following confirmation screen will appear.

Before confirming this action, it is important to acquire a list of changes present in the data set relative to the original uploaded file. To get this list of modified data, click View Edited Records. A new browser window will open with a list of modified data. Save or print the Edited Records page to use as a guide to modifying the data in your student information system to reflect the changes made here. An example of this list follows the confirmation example.

To complete the BEDS data submission process, click Confirm. To exit this page and return to the BEDS Preview, click Cancel.

An example of a list of edited records.

File ID	State Student ID	Data Element	Previous Value	New Value
1800	1234567890	CourseNumberNCES		1130705010122
1800	1234567890	Ethniccode	x	W
1800	1234567890	Gender	x	M

Once the BEDS data has been created, the following success page is displayed.
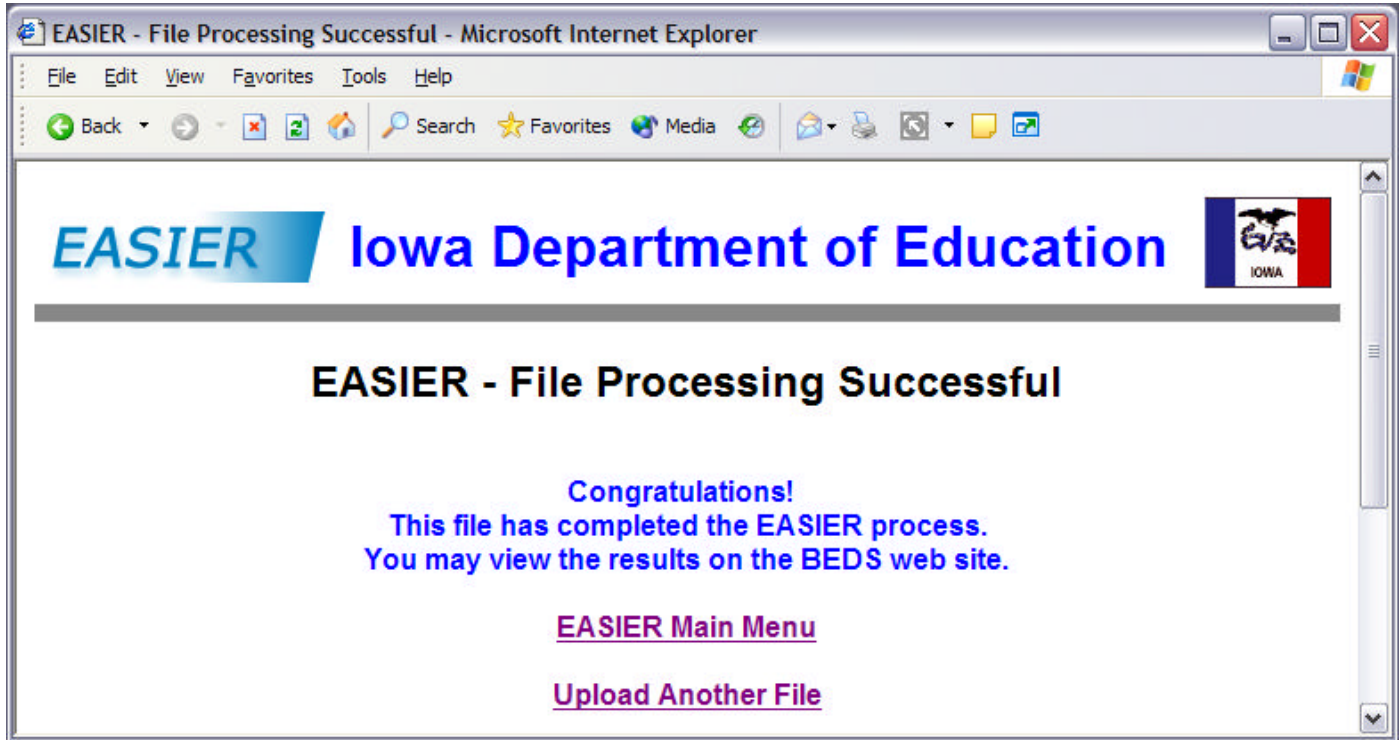
A completed file appears as follows in the list of submitted files. All data contained in the file has been transferred to final storage and BEDS reports have been created. The file is no longer available for further processing.

BEDS CERTIFICATION

After submitting data for all students in the district, the data must be certified. The final data set can be reviewed and certified by entering either the Fall BEDS or Spring BEDS applications from the Application Menu.
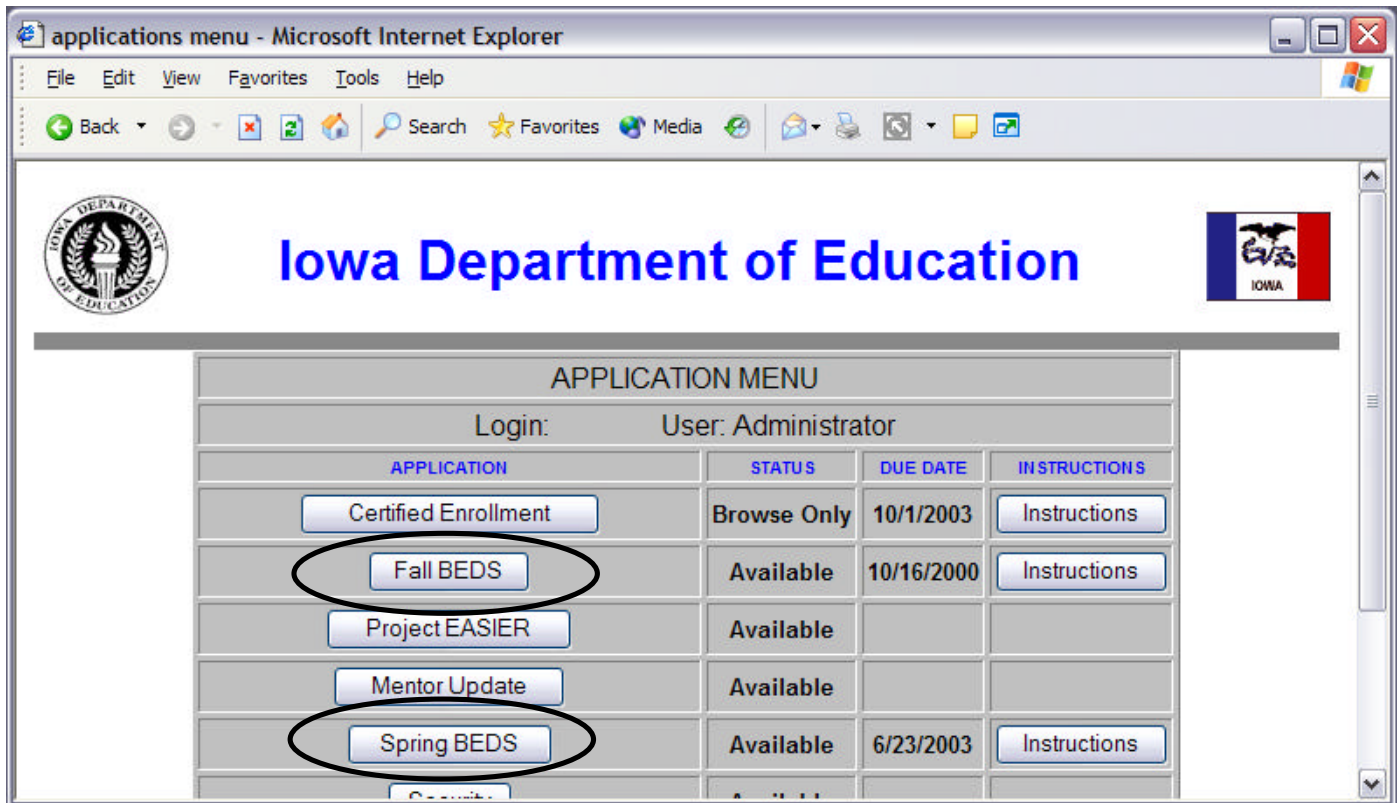
REFERENCE

Data Dictionary

The Iowa Department of Education published a document containing detailed information pertaining to the Project EASIER data elements. This includes data elements needed for Fall and Spring BEDS. This data dictionary is available on the web at http://www.state.ia.us/educate/fis/pre/pe/index.html. The data validation routines in the web application are based on the specifications outlined in the data dictionary.

Glossary

Term	Meaning
data validation	A method or procedure that performs a particular function in the examination of data for presence, validity, and completeness.
edit	Modification of a student record during processing to resolve a data issue that has created an error or warning.
encryption	The scrambling of data files as a way to achieve data security; encrypted data can only be read by the sending and receiving parties.
error	A problem with the data that must be corrected before files can be processed
upload	To transmit a data file from a desktop computer to a server, using standard technologies available in all modern web browsers.
warnings	Messages that indicate a problem in the data file that may require attention but will not stop files from being processed.